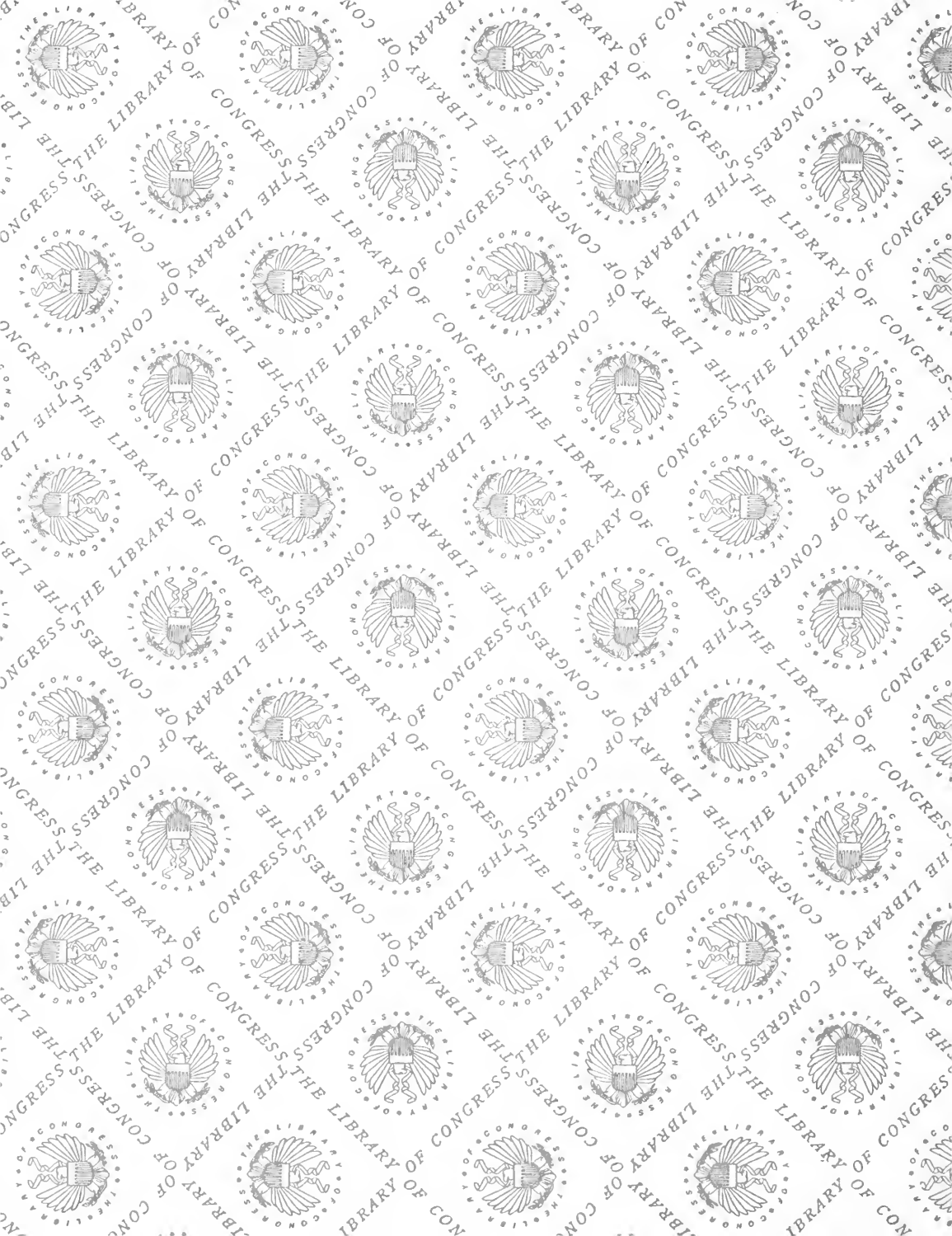
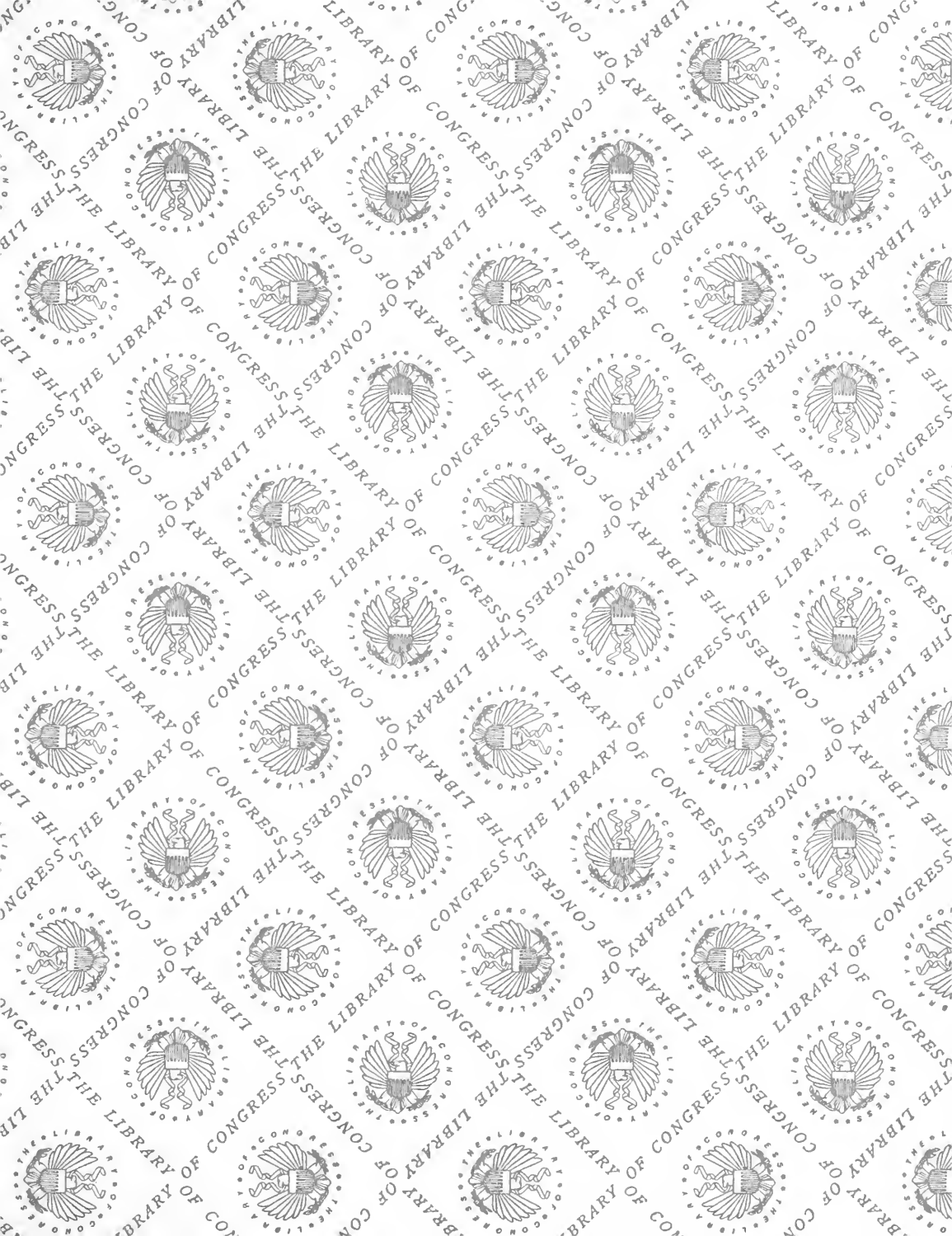


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Stray Writings

By J. N. ASHBURN



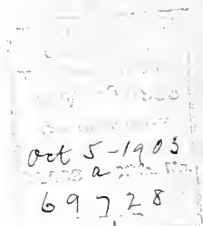
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Maiden's Prayer.

I lived with my aunt for a dozen years,
From childhood to girlhood grown ;
A maiden aunt who was mother to me,
For I never knew my own ,
And much I revered that loving aunt,
With her soft caress and tone.

She heard me repeat my little prayer
As I lay in my bed at rest,
And always gave me a good-night kiss
As she pressed me to her breast,
And, after reading the good, good book,
Deliberately she undressed.

And then in the stillness of the night
She meekly knelt at her bed,
And modestly shading her earnest eyes
She lowly bent her head,
And thus in devotional attitude
Her silent petition said.

Once I remember asking my aunt
If I should not kneel down
At my little bed and say my prayer
As she had always done ;
She shook her head with a rogueish eye
And a smile that resembled a frown.

And I grew to notice her prayer was
She simply had time to kneel [short ;
And bow her head, and up again,
Then a furtive glance would steal
About as if the boon she sought
The shadows might reveal.

Again I asked my aunt one night
As I had older grown,
And being tired, my prayer seemed long,
Could I not say her own?
I kneel at my bed and say her prayer
To God and myself alone?

She pressed my cheeks with caressing
And mid hearty laughter said : [hands
"I hardly call it a prayer, my child,
Each night as I bow my head,
I'm simply peering to see, if perchance,
A man be under the bed."

And though my aunt was most sincere
She hardly put it fair,
As now I feel when maiden grown
And loved by lover fair ;
I think this constant watch for a man
Is really the maiden's prayer.

J. N. ASHBURN,



Annual Club Song.

As time is retreating,
 Brings annual greeting
Again to the members assembled to-night,
We clasp hands in gladness,
 Without shade of sadness,
And thank the good Giver for hearts that are light.

We meet in firm friendship,
 The only true kinship
That strikes without discord the key of the soul ;
We sink self in others,
 True sisters and brothers,
And pray no estrangement may dim our bright roll.

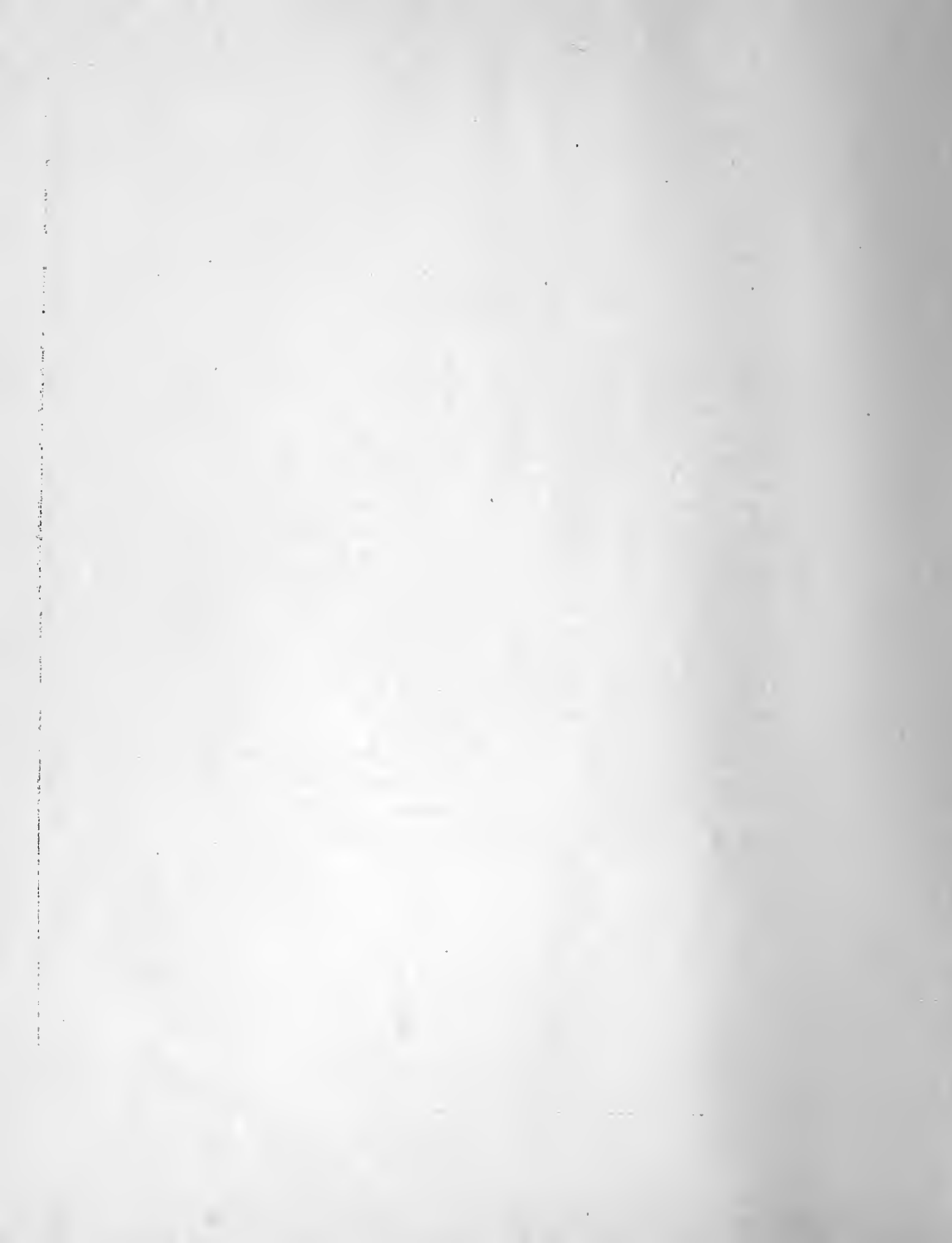
While bright flowers are blooming,
 Their incense perfuming
In dalliance fragrant the soft balmy air,
We plight to each other
 Our friendship forever,
And promise our sorrows and pleasures to share.

J. N. ASHBURN.

Our Baby.

I asked its mother tother day if I was struck with simples?
If other babies in this world had such sweet, cunning dimples?
She said that I was mighty sane in all my observations,
And that no babies had this charm except our own relations.
And I believe the woman's right, for just think how distressing
If every black-brown-yellow kid could boast this special blessing,
I've heard Jemima's strutting boy blab furious and simple,
But that wart sprouted on his nose can't pass for any dimple.
It takes this fair-haired Eleanor with cheeks like woodland roses,
With cherry lips that shower love in all their varied poses,
With twinkling feet that have the charm of leading their posessor
Into such 'witching antics that perforce we must caress her,
Whose eyes have never seen a wart, whose nose will never wear 'em,
Whose brow was never born to scowl at other kids to scare 'em—
I say it takes this two-year-old, twice blest with love and duty,
To show the world the genuine— — AMERICANUS BEAUTY.

J. N. ASHBURN.



Our Book Agent.

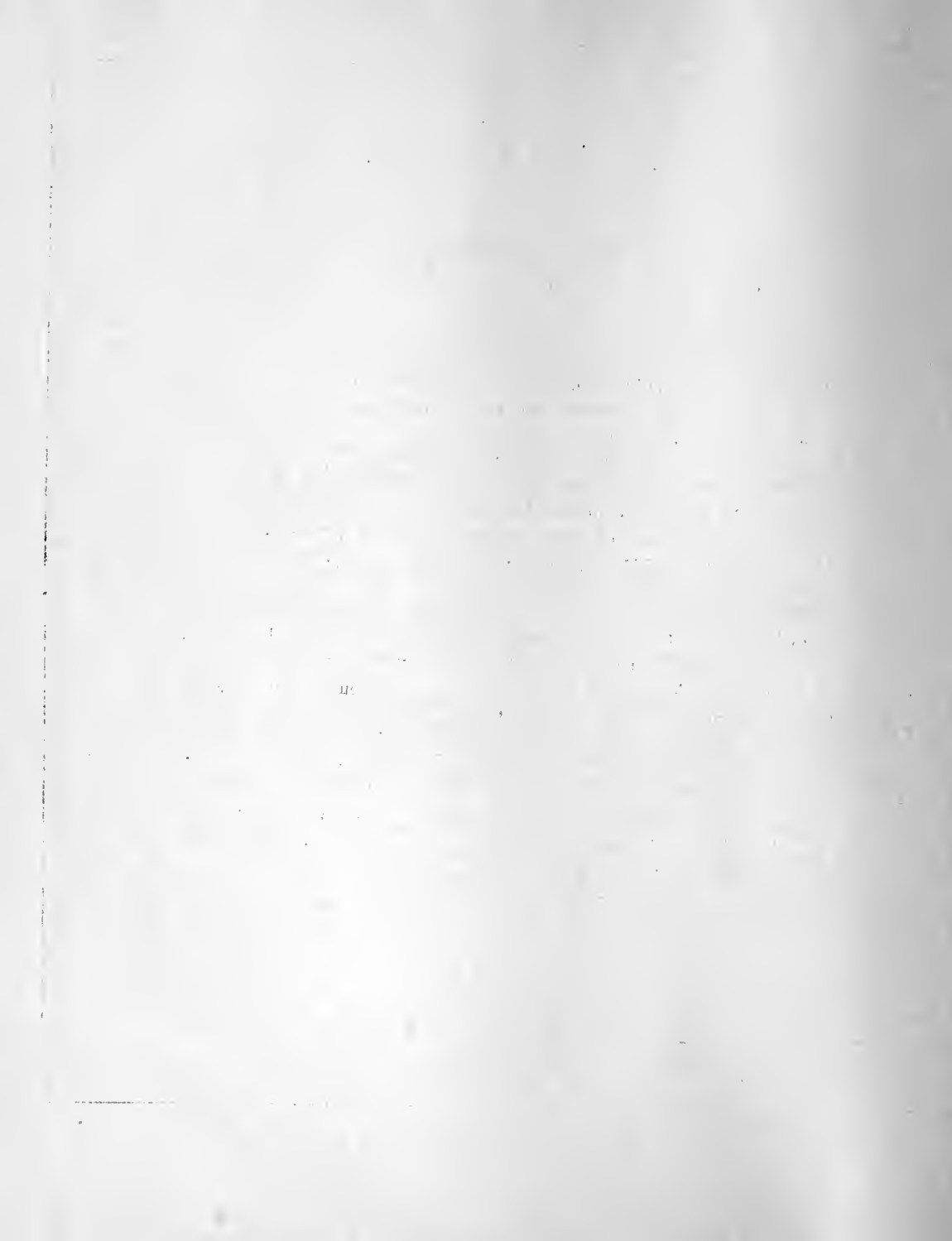
O, she came in hesitating, and stood patiently awaiting
Some attention from the Lordlings who keep books at our place,
And she seemed a bit dejected when the Lordlings all affected
Not to see the anxious pleading that suffused her pretty face.

But she came from Mississippi, and was moderately lippy
And she asked the Lords to purchase "New Alaska" neatly bound ;
Said it was no stale old Nancy, but would please their cultured fancy,
And she promised each a present when the holidays came round.

Well, they bought ; and Christmas morning without further word or warning
Came three handsome perfumed presents from the "Editress at Yale ;"
And the Lordlings loud did clap her, vowing that this southern wrapper
With Connecticut best filler, was assured a ready sale.

And each morn they grab the duster, and "sleek up" with pomp and bluster,
Slily watching for an editress to call in some disguise ;
And they swear with nerves quite steady that their money will be ready
For the maid that sells "Alaska", having pretty mouth and eyes.

J. N. ASHBURN.



The Hammock.

Hammocky June : A dreamy lady in a lazy hammock swung
'Neath an elm so broad and shady that its cool arms overhung
A grassplot so enchanting that I no excuses made,
Nor another deemed I wanting for remaining in its shade.

Yet a secret I'm confiding—a secret you would guess—
Cupid can't stay long in hiding, we are lovers, nothing less.
So I set me down beside her on the hammock's ample breast,
And swearing I adore her, kiss the hand I've gently pressed.

Oh ; those rosy lips so luscious, they suggest a fruit so rare,
So ripe, so sweet, so precious, must be picked, and picked with care.
And I feel that I am gifted, duty whispers I'm the one,
Her head is gently lifted, we touch noses—it is done.

Now I lay a contribution on the flower bordered walk,
Picking buds in evolution that can smile and almost talk ;
But in giving her the roses, once again those magic powers
Compel our touching noses as her fingers touch the flowers.

Yes ; from Adam down to Moses, and from Moses to this day,
Lads and lasses have touched noses in the fervent selfsame way ;
And I'm not the fellow creature to discard an ancient rite,
Especially this feature—Ella, here's my nose—Good Night.

J. N. ASHBURN.

Explanatory.

THIS Score Book is published for the convenience of those who indulge in innocent games when the duties of the day are over, or when relaxation from labor is required. To them, a permanent record of this size, neatly kept by the owner's hand, faithfully chronicling the pleasurable gatherings of the household and its friends, will ever accumulate interest with age, hold an exalted place in the library, be a cherished Souvenir, and an exponent of their idle hours.

In the blank space at the bottom of the page autographs of the players may be placed, sketches drawn or pertinent remarks written, which will be perused with interest in the far future, when the fleeting present has become a waning past.



German.

Never play for money. We grow bad fast enough without this additional allurements. Collection!



Golden Text.

Whoop 'er up while you are young, in a quiet and orderly way, nor depart therefrom as you grow old.



Caution.

Keep your eye on the trolley and your foot off the track.

Dedicatory.

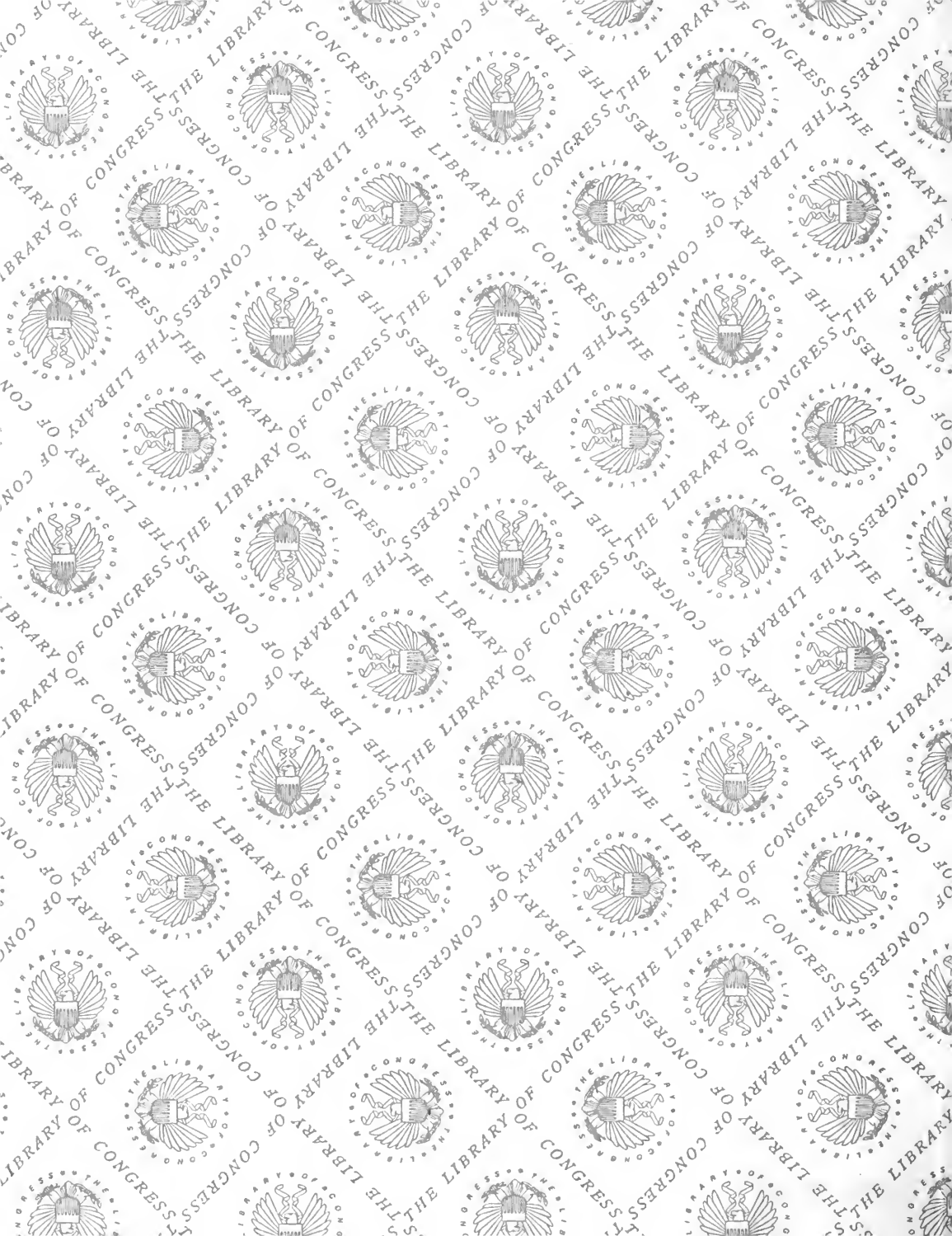
When night has drawn her mantle
And the quitting bell has rung,
And the day's mad rush of worry
Has stilled its busy tongue,
Then court your own home fireside,
Call genial neighbors in,
Pull out the old card table,
And let the game begin.

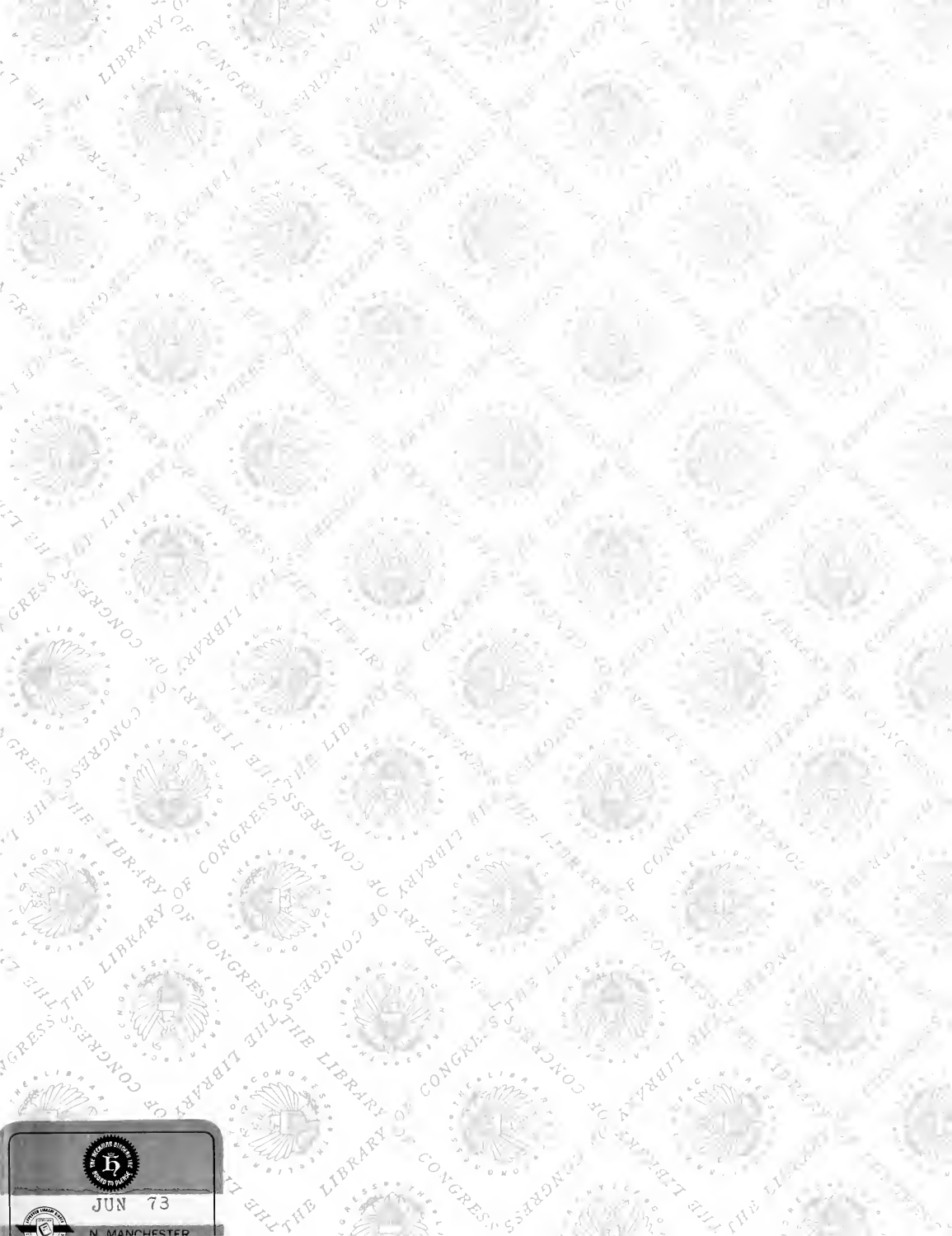
Play for pleasure—yet in earnest,
Take defeat with solemn grace ;
Record your frequent winnings
With a smile all round your face ;
And when the game is ended,
Add the columns fair and true,
And may they prove that fortune
Very often favored you.

Let it be a merry party,
With lady partners bright ;
Your temper will be sweeter,
And your wit of higher flight ;
For we, by nature courteous,
Will not deny a minute
That the only game worth playing
Is one with woman in it.

Then may pleasant slumbers follow,
And the morrow's sunrise find
You bright and fresh for labor,
And at peace with all mankind.
J. N. ASHBURN.

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